

# Vocabulary

Grade 4 Unit 2: Eureka! The Art of Invention



## Adages & Proverbs

# Introduction: Adages & Proverbs



A **proverb** is a common statement that gives advice or expresses a well-known truth.

An **adage** is a short saying that shares wisdom or makes a common observation.

Proverbs and adages often use *figurative language*.

To understand the meaning of proverbs and adages, we have to recognize the difference between the *literal* meanings of the words in the statement and their *figurative* meanings.

The literal meaning is the dictionary definition of the words in the statement.

The figurative meaning is implied. It contains ideas, emotions, or connections that differ from the dictionary definition.

Let's look at a common expression that Jacques Cousteau might have used in our *Eureka!* unit:

**You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink.**

Is this statement literal or figurative? Do you think he is really talking about a thirsty horse?

**You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink** is a proverb that uses figurative language.

If Jacques Cousteau uses this expression, he really means:

You can give someone advice, but you  
can't make them follow it.

Let's Try It Together!





Let's look at this common expression George Washington Carver might have used in *Eureka!*:

**Don't count your chickens before they hatch.**

Do you think this statement is literal or figurative? Is he really talking about counting chickens?

Stay seated if you think **Don't count your chickens before they hatch** is a literal statement.

Stand up if you think **Don't count your chickens before they hatch** is a figurative statement.

Turn to a partner and discuss what you think Carver means when he uses this expression:

**Don't count your chickens before they hatch.**

**Don't count your chickens before they hatch** is a proverb that uses figurative language.

If George uses this expression, he really means:

**Don't count on something that  
hasn't happened yet.**

Now you try one with a partner. Look at this expression  
Thomas Edison might have used:

**Don't put all your eggs in one basket.**

Do you think this statement is literal or figurative? Is he really talking about gathering eggs in a basket?

Stand up if you think **Don't put all your eggs in one basket** is a literal statement.

Stay seated if you think **Don't put all your eggs in one basket** is a figurative statement.

Turn to a partner and discuss what you think Edison means when he uses this expression:

**Don't put all your eggs in one basket.**

Did you remember the steps?



1. Read the statement or expression.

**Don't put all your eggs in one basket.**

2. Decide if the statement is literal or figurative:

figurative

3. Determine the meaning of the idiom:

Don't focus on just one thing.

Now Try One by Yourself!



Look at this common expression:

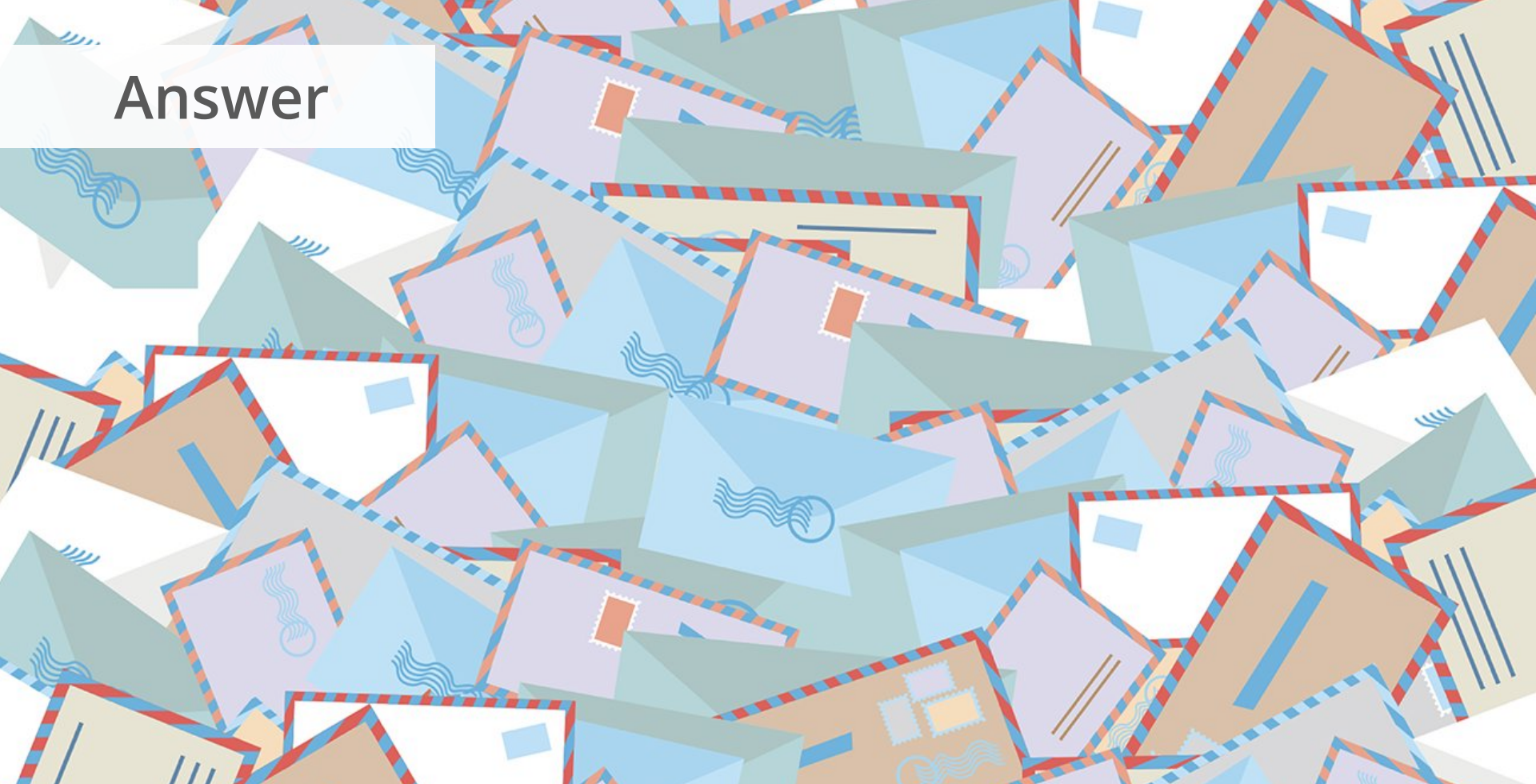
**Two wrongs don't make a right.**

Write the word *literal* if you think this statement is literal.

Write the word *figurative* if you think this statement is figurative.

Then, write what you think this statement means.

Answer



## Figurative

If someone does something hurtful to another person, that person shouldn't do something hurtful in return.